

POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION
Michigan State Board of Education
Policy Framework for the Implementation of Goals for Special Education
Adopted December 1999

A policy framework for implementing the State Board of Education goals for special education is based on a commitment to a performance-based education system which is responsible to the needs of all children and youth, including those with disabilities. In such a system, all children reap the benefits of public education through effective, research-based and validated instruction, and practices which are grounded upon equitable standards and high expectations for all.

Special education is a support system for students with disabilities to foster their progress in the general curriculum. The general education environment, curriculum, and assessments are accepted as the starting points in designing individualized educational programs for students with disabilities. Attention is given to technology and other assistive options to support the teaching-learning process. Resources within the family, school, and community are utilized efficiently to support the total educational process.

Accountability is achieved through a balanced approach to inputs and system design, assurance of procedural safeguards, demonstration of compliance with state and federal requirements, and most importantly through performance expectations and documentation of student outcomes.

In order to:

- achieve the priorities of the State Board of Education;
- meet the requirements of the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- reflect the findings of current research on child development, the impact of disability, and the teaching-learning process;
- reflect the findings on the current state of special education in Michigan; and
- incorporate a performance- and standards-based accountability structure for special education, the following policies shall be adopted.

Alignment with Federal Statutory and Regulatory Framework

1. Administrative Rules for special education must align with federal regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as published in the Federal Register on March 12, 1999.

Support for Early Intervention Services (Birth through Age 2)

2. Administrative Rules for special education must align with Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for early intervention services to eligible infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

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Support for Preschool Services (Ages 3-5)

3. Administrative Rules for special education must align with Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for preschool services to children ages 3-5 with disabilities.
4. Administrative Rules for special education and pupil accounting shall support the provision of preschool services to children with disabilities in locations or settings where young children without disabilities access early childhood education programs and services.

Support for Early Identification and Intervention to Reduce Academic Failure in the Early Grades

5. Integration of planning and service delivery shall be supported, within the parameters of federal statutes and regulations, for schoolwide models of early identification and intervention for students demonstrating low achievement and potential for referral to special education services.

Support for Student-centered and Achievement-focused Educational Programs

6. Individual student characteristics guide the individual education program planning process.

Support for Transition to Adult Life Roles

7. Beginning at age 14 for students with disabilities, transition planning and transition services constitute major components of each student's individual education program.
8. Public schools function as the lead but not exclusive agency in the development of transition services.
9. Public schools may contract with other public and private agencies for transition services as appropriate to meet the goals of each student's individual education program.
10. Community-based instruction shall be supported in special education and pupil accounting Rules.
11. Transition services may include services other than direct instruction and shall be supported in special education and pupil accounting Rules.
12. For students with disabilities aged 22-26, transition is the primary focus of each student's individual education program.

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Support for Teachers and Practitioners

13. Teachers and practitioners are supported with access to continuous learning, appropriate technology, aids, and supports to effectively engage in the teaching-learning process for students with disabilities.
14. Current research and proven practices guide the support and delivery of preservice and continuing personnel development as related to students with disabilities.

Support for Connecting Schools and Families

15. Parent involvement is supported in each student's educational program.

Support for Administrators

16. Administrative flexibility is supported in accordance with current research and best practice.

Accountability

17. Standards of quality for the delivery of early intervention services for infants and toddlers, and preschool special education services, are used for quality assurance and accountability processes.
18. Schools are held accountable for effective service delivery, compliance with state and federal regulations, and for student performance.